


However, applicants submit that the three groups of invention identified in the outstanding office action are closely related and, therefore, would require common areas of search and consideration. Thus, there is no benefit in having these groups of claims examined and prosecuted in separate applications.

In view of the foregoing, applicants submit that the claims of Groups I, II, and II should be examined on the merits at this time.


In view of the all of the foregoing, applicants submit that this case is in condition for allowance and such allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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12/23/99 Date	 Cheryl S. Mascitti